

## The Reverend Marjo Anderson

2-Narrative 01 – Creation Story #2  
Genesis 2:4b-25; Mark 10:6-9

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### “Whatever Your Need, God Is Greater Indeed”

Did you know that what we are used to reading in this story of Genesis is not what is actually written?

We’re used to reading about the man in the garden that was named Adam, correct?

But if you read the Hebrew you’ll discover that the story is about a creature

which because it was formed from the adamah (earth/soil/humus) is referred to as the adam.

It’s a pun that could easily be translated as the human formed from the humus,

or as today’s translation puts it, the earth creature formed from the earth.

The word adam in this story is not a proper name.

The word adam does not mean “man”.

The word adam does not mean the male of the species.

I bring this to your attention because when we read it as written,

we can see that it’s about something far deeper,

something far more important,

something far more relevant

than an explanation of why there are males and females in the human species.

It’s about more than that.

It’s about how God works in every one of our lives to give us what we need

and to change us into something more than we are.

If you read the text closely you’ll discover a few important things.

First, it starts with a need.

*“It is not good for the earth creature to be alone. I will make a fitting companion for it.”*

Now notice who says this.

It’s God, right?

It’s not that the human was complaining about being lonely.

It’s not that the human even experienced a sense of loneliness.

It couldn’t, because being alone was all that it knew; it had nothing else to compare it with.

But even though the human didn’t know it wasn’t good for it to be alone, God knew it.

Even though the human didn’t know it could benefit from a fitting companion,

God knew it.

Even though the human didn’t know its own needs, God knew.

Because God made us, because God loves us, and because God knows us inside and out,

God knows that we are in need even before we know it ourselves.

So that’s the first thing this story teaches us: God knows our needs even before we do.

The second thing it shows us is that it can be a long process.

Since God had made the earth creature from the earth,

God decided to make a fitting companion for it from the earth also.

God makes one creature after the other and brings them to the human but nothing clicks.

For some reason, making new and different things didn't accomplish the goal.

Now it's not clear why God did this.

I mean, shouldn't God have known from the beginning that none of the animals would suffice?

That seems hard to believe.

So maybe it was that God wanted it to be a joint venture.

God didn't just want to make the fitting companion and give it to the human as a gift;  
rather, God wanted this to be a joint project.

God wanted the human to be invested in the outcome  
and so needed the human to be invested in the process.

God could have provided the fitting companion right away, but what would have been the response?

"Oh, ok, God, that's nice."

But by allowing the process to unfold,

by exploring all kinds of possibilities,

by involving the human in the search process,

the response changed from "oh, ok, that's nice" to "At last!!! This is it!!! This is perfect!"

And that, my friends, goes a long way to explain why it often takes so long for us

to get the answers to our questions, the solutions to our problems, the filling of our needs.

God knows our needs even before we do, and God knows how best to meet them,

but God also knows that in order for us to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that it's the best answer,  
in order for us to be excited and enthusiastic about the solution,

in order for us to feel the full measure of gratitude and joy that makes the gift so valued and cherished,  
we need to be involved in the treasure hunt.

So #1, God knows our needs before we do,

#2, God wants us involved in the process,

and #3, to get from where we are to where we want to be, requires a letting go.

Finally it became apparent that the fitting companion could not come from outside the earth creature;

it had to come from the earth creature itself.

And so God takes something (it doesn't say "rib" - just "an angular organ") from inside the human.

In other words, in order for us to move from the "not good" place we are

to the good place God desires for us,

we must allow God to take from us what we may have seen as essential in the past,

but which God knows will not be necessary in the future.

So...God knows our needs before we do,

God works with us to fulfill our needs,

the process requires a letting go of some kind,

and fourth, the letting go will leave us changed

*"<sup>21</sup> ...God divided the earth creature in two... <sup>22</sup>...then fashioned the two halves into male and female..."*

So...God knows our needs before we do,

God works with us to fulfill our needs,

the process requires a letting go, leaving us changed, but better off,

as underneath our differences we discover our common humanity and experience joy.

*"[God] presented them to one another [and]*

*When the male realized what had happened, <sup>23</sup> he exclaimed,*

*'This time, this is the one! Bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!*

*Now, she will be ... [one thing] and I will be ...[another] ... [and] yet we are of one flesh!'"*

In closing, let me share one brief story with you.

His name was Patrick.

57 years old, the only son of an African-American father and an Irish mother,

he had been happily married and proudly self-employed, but now he was alone, living in a shelter.

Six years before, his 45-year-old wife had been stricken with cancer

and as he had spent more and more time caring for her, he had spent less and less time at work.

By the time his wife died 3 years later, his business had gone under and the bank had foreclosed on his house. Now he showed up each morning at the same place undocumented workers gathered,

and most days someone hired him to do menial labor of some sort.

He kept praying that one day it would lead to a steady job, but so far it hadn't.

Still, he made enough to keep himself fed, and the shelter gave him a place to sleep.

For months he was able to go on like this until one day when he was out walking

and a woman had fled screaming past him, a man chasing her with a piece of pipe clenched in his hand.

As the man lifted his hand to bring the pipe down on the woman, Patrick had intervened.

In the end the woman had escaped serious injury, the police had come, the man had been hauled off to jail,

and Patrick had been left with a severely injured wrist that although not broken,

made it impossible for him to work.

And that meant no money for food – which was what led him to the soup kitchen.

He hated having to accept charity but as it turned out the people there made him feel most welcome.

There was a whole group of them from another church who seemed to be both clients and volunteers.

One woman in particular had made him feel special.

Her name was Joy and she was from the Caribbean

and when she spoke to him she smiled warmly and there was a sparkle in her eyes.

After several weeks he asked her out for coffee; she demurred but the next day invited him to church.

He went, of course, because she had asked.

It wasn't the reverent worship he'd been used to in the Episcopal & Catholic churches he'd attended as a child.

The service was 2 hours and was loud and a bit chaotic,

but he got a lot out of the pastor's motivational message, and the music was inspiring,

and the group couldn't have been more warm and welcoming.

He kept going week after week & pretty soon he realized he wasn't attending just because of the woman named Joy

but because of the joy he felt whenever he worshipped with these people.

He told the pastor he wanted what these people had

and that had led him to be baptized and to receive the Holy Spirit,

and then his heart had been filled with a joy he had never known before.

And then more incredible things happened.

Joy and he began dating,

a man in the congregation gave him work,

Joy enrolled in a cooking class at another church,

and when she had graduated from the class she and Patrick agreed to launch a small restaurant

that would be housed in their church's new building.

It had taken years,

but Patrick was no longer injured, no longer living in a shelter, no longer unemployed, and no longer alone.

God had known his needs better than he himself.

God had not provided the answers immediately all neatly tied up and gift wrapped

but had worked with Patrick throughout a process that had taken time.

He had lost his wife, his job, his house, and his health,

and he would never ever be the same person he had been before.

But as great as his losses had been, so was the joy he now knew.

Now he had a new partner, new work, a new community of friends, new-found faith, and new-found joy.

It was a different life, with people quite different from those he had known before,

but he had found joy in the differences – joy in the different people now in his life

and joy in the different man he had become.

Like we see in the story in Genesis and the story of Patrick,  
God knows our needs before we do and works with us to fulfill our needs.  
That process requires a letting go,  
which leaves us changed, but in the long run better off.  
And underneath our differences we discover our common humanity and experience joy.

Whatever your needs are, God already knows them.  
However frustrated you may be at the situations in your life,  
God is already at work with you to change them.

Yes, there will be loss and grief – there's no way around it –  
because in order to move from where you are to where you want to be,  
God will need to change you.

But just as God knew what the earth creature needed,  
and just as God knew what Patrick needed,  
God knows what you need  
and so the change that God makes in you  
will be a change that will surprise you with joy.

God made you.  
God knows you inside and out.  
And God loves you.

And that means that whatever desire is in your heart, it is God's desire to fulfill it.  
It may take a while, and the process may involve some pain and loss,  
but in the end you can be assured that you will find joy  
for whatever your need, God is greater indeed! **Amen**